

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Licensing and Regulatory Committee held at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA with remote attendance on Tuesday, 25th April, 2023 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillor Tony Easson (Chairman)
County Councillor John Crook (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Christopher Edwards, Jane Lucas, Alistair Neill, Sue Riley, Dale Rooke, Jackie Strong and Ann Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

David Jones	Head of Public Protection
Linda O'Gorman	Principal Licensing Officer
Ben Davies	Solicitor
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors Lisa Dymock and Armand Watts

1. Declarations of Interest.

No declarations of interest were made.

2. To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting.

2.1. Licensing and Regulatory Committee - Rights of Way Panel, 30th January 2023

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

2.2. Licensing and Regulatory Committee - 31st January 2023

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3. Gambling Act Fees

The Principal Licensing Officer presented the Gambling Act Fees report. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions:

- In response to a question, the Principal Licensing Officer explained that the fee level reflects the cost to the authority of the application process adding that the County's economic position is not a criteria. The premises currently licensed have strict guidelines to follow and complete a risk assessment for each venue considering e.g. problem gambling and how it affects customers. The Head of Public Protection advised that there is a resolution not to permit casinos in the County that is subject to three yearly review. This decision reflects the detrimental impact on health, particularly those falling into the lower socio-economic groups and efforts are made to address problem gambling on the high street. The Gambling Commission covers online gambling.

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- A Member asked about the poor condition of some venues and queried if license renewal is related to reasonable premises maintenance. It was confirmed that individual license holders must comply with several criteria for the operation of the premises. It was clarified that it is an annual fee not a renewal. When the license is agreed under the Gambling Act, it is a lifetime license and can only be reviewed if there is e.g. a breach of the conditions. In terms of disrepair, intervention would depend on potential risk to public safety. Outside signs e.g. inviting under 18s to an over 18s venue would be permitted. There is close liaison with the Gambling Commission if there are concerns and venues are regularly monitored by Licensing Officers.
- Noting that Monmouthshire does not provide a gambling counselling service, a Member questioned welfare provision. It was suggested that by not accepting the drop in fees, there would be more funding to contribute to a level of counselling service. The Principal Licensing Officer referred to the sections of the Policy addressing problem gambling e.g. venues must display details of where advice is available. Each venue must have a unique risk assessment bespoke to its locality. Crime statistics are monitored. It was explained that the Citizens Advice Bureau counselling service in Newport also covers Monmouthshire.
- As fee levels are restricted to the recovery of costs, a Member sought clarification if full costs are recovered, and, if not, if full recovery was possible to provide funding to support those with gambling issues in Monmouthshire. The Officer explained that there is an all-Wales formula to determine fees, based on a number of factors and the maximum permitted is charged.
- A Member expressed concerns about young people using high street gambling questioning the appropriateness of the location of betting shops e.g. next to outdoor cafes. The Officer explained that decisions on all new licensing applications are decided by Licensing Committee and assessed against the Policy e.g. not near schools, not affecting children or vulnerable adults. Businesses in the vicinity are not necessarily a consideration.

It was agreed to review fees and recovery of costs in time for next year's fee review (May 2024) and to consider the potential to employ a counsellor.

The report recommendations were as follows:

- (i) the fees and charges detailed in Appendix A of the report be approved and have effect from 21st May 2023; and
- (ii) The fees are subsequently reviewed annually.

Upon being put to a vote, it was resolved to approve the fees and charges detailed in Appendix A effective from 21st May 2023.

4. Next Meeting: 13th June 2023

The meeting ended at 10.35 am